

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A coupling device comprising:

a first pipe section; and

a second pipe section, the first pipe section and the second pipe ~~sections~~ section being movable relative to each other;

the first pipe section having a first flange at an end thereof, the first flange having an end face;

the second pipe section having a second flange at an end thereof, the second flange being mutually sealed with the first flange, the second flange including an end face facing the first flange, the end face of the second flange having an annular groove, the second flange further including at least one duct leading to the annular groove and being configured to selectively provide compressed air or an underpressure to the annular groove;

[[and]]

a sealing element being disposed within the annular groove, the sealing element being a sealing ring made of an elastic material, the sealing ring being pressed against the end face of the first flange when the compressed air is provided to the annular groove by the at least one duct, and the sealing ring being sucked into the annular groove when the underpressure is provided to the annular groove by the at least one duct; and

the annular groove being configured to have a depth, from the end face of the second flange to a floor of the annular groove, which is greater than a maximum cross-sectional dimension of the sealing ring so that, after the sealing ring is sucked into the annular groove, and comes to rest against the floor of the annular groove, the distance of a point on the surface of the sealing ring, which is furthest from the floor of the annular groove, to the floor of the annular groove is less than the depth of the annular groove, thereby allowing a mutual displacement of the first flange and the second flange in a radial direction, without wear to the sealing ring.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously Presented) The coupling device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the sealing ring has a circular cross section.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Previously Presented) The coupling device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coupling device is disposed in a cleaning, disinfecting, and drying plant so as to couple a receiving trolley and a washing chamber, the first pipe section and the first flange being fastened to the receiving trolley, and the second pipe section being fastened to the washing chamber by the second flange

6. (New) A coupling device comprising:

a first pipe section; and

a second pipe section, the first pipe section and the second pipe section being movable relative to each other;

the first pipe section having a first flange at an end thereof, the first flange having an end face;

the second pipe section having a second flange at an end thereof, the second flange being mutually sealed with the first flange, the second flange including an end face facing the first flange, the end face of the second flange having an annular groove, the second flange further including at least one duct opening into the annular groove and being configured to selectively provide compressed air or an underpressure to the annular groove; and

a sealing element being disposed within the annular groove, the sealing element being a sealing ring made of an elastic material, the sealing ring being pressed against the end face of the first flange when the compressed air is provided to the annular groove by the at least one duct, and the sealing ring being sucked into the annular groove when the underpressure is provided to the annular groove by the at least one duct.

7. (New) A coupling device comprising:

a first pipe section; and

a second pipe section, the first pipe section and the second pipe section being movable relative to each other;

the first pipe section having a first flange at an end thereof, the first flange having an end face;

the second pipe section having a second flange at an end thereof, the second flange being mutually sealed with the first flange, the second flange including an end face facing the first flange, the end face of the second flange having an annular groove, the second flange further including at least one duct leading to the annular groove and being configured to selectively provide compressed air or an underpressure to the annular groove;

a sealing element being disposed within the annular groove, the sealing element being a sealing ring made of an elastic material, the sealing ring being pressed against the end face of the first flange when the compressed air is provided to the annular groove by the at least one duct, and the sealing ring being sucked into the annular groove when the underpressure is provided to the annular groove by the at least one duct; and

the annular groove and the sealing ring being configured such that, when the sealing ring is sucked into the annular groove and comes to rest on a floor of the annular groove, the sealing ring is below the top edges of the annular groove.